

**ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
NORTHWEST INDIANA TRANSPORTATION  
STUDY COMMISSION**



**Indiana Legislative Services Agency  
200 W. Washington Street, Suite 301  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204**

**October, 1999**

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# **NORTHWEST INDIANA TRANSPORTATION STUDY COMMITTEE**

## **Membership Roster**

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### **Staff**

James Jett  
Attorney for the Committee

James Sperlik  
Fiscal Analyst for the Committee

A copy of this report is available on the Internet. Reports, minutes, and notices are organized by committee. This report and other documents for this Committee can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.state.in.us/legislative/>.

## **I. STATUTORY DIRECTIVE**

The Indiana General Assembly enacted legislation directing the Commission to do the following:

- (1) Evaluate existing studies that address the needs and viability of high speed rail service in and through the state, including the:
  - (A) Midwest High Speed Rail Initiative Study;
  - (B) Federal Railroad Administration High Speed Rail Study; and
  - (C) the Indiana Passenger Rail Study.
- (2) Review other high speed rail issues identified by the commission as requiring study.
- (3) Monitor the development of commuter transportation and rail service in the west Lake County-Chicago Lowell-Chicago and Valparaiso-Chicago corridors.
- (4) Study all aspects of regional mass transportation and road and highway needs in Lake County, Porter County, LaPorte County, St. Joseph County, and Elkhart County.
- (5) Study other topics as assigned by the legislative council.

In addition, the Legislative Council assigned the study of viability of high speed rail in Indiana (SB 275) to the Commission to study during the 1999 interim.

## **II. SUMMARY OF WORK PROGRAM**

The Commission met three times during the 1999 interim session on September 9, 1999, September 30, 1999, and October 21, 1999.

The Commission is not required to file a final report. Meeting minutes for the Commission can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.state.in.us/legislative/>.

## **III. COMMISSION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Commission determined that the issues of extra heavy duty trucks, also known as Michigan trains, and high speed rail need additional study.

The Commission requests the following information for its 2000 interim meetings:

- 1) The results of the Michigan train study initiated by the Indiana Department of Revenue Motor Carrier Service Division and the Indiana Department of Transportation. The Commission particularly requests that the following information is included in any findings:
  - (A) The total number of Michigan trains traveling Indiana roads.
  - (B) A breakdown of interstate and intrastate Michigan train trips.
  - (C) An overview of the bridges affected by Michigan trains.
  - (D) Identification of weak bridges and roads on Michigan train routes.
  - (E) A map showing all Michigan train routes and bridges.

(F) Any Michigan train routes that could currently carry 164,000 pounds.

(G) An analysis of any economic benefit that would result from an increase in the Michigan train weight.

(H) An analysis of the effects that additional truck axles have on both bridges and roads.

(I) The identification and analysis of possible routes for Michigan trains into Illinois.

(J) An analysis of safety issues involved in an increase in maximum truck weight.

(2) The findings of the Indiana Department of Transportation's study of Michigan train permit fees.

The members of the Commission present at the October 21, 1999, meeting also urge the members of the Commission to sponsor the following legislation during the 2000 session:

1) A resolution encouraging INDOT to create a high-speed rail division. (presented to the Commission by Sen. Landske).

2) A bill draft of the Midwest High Speed Rail Compact. (presented to the Commission by Sen. Landske)

3) A bill draft changing the violation for a train that blocks a railroad crossing.